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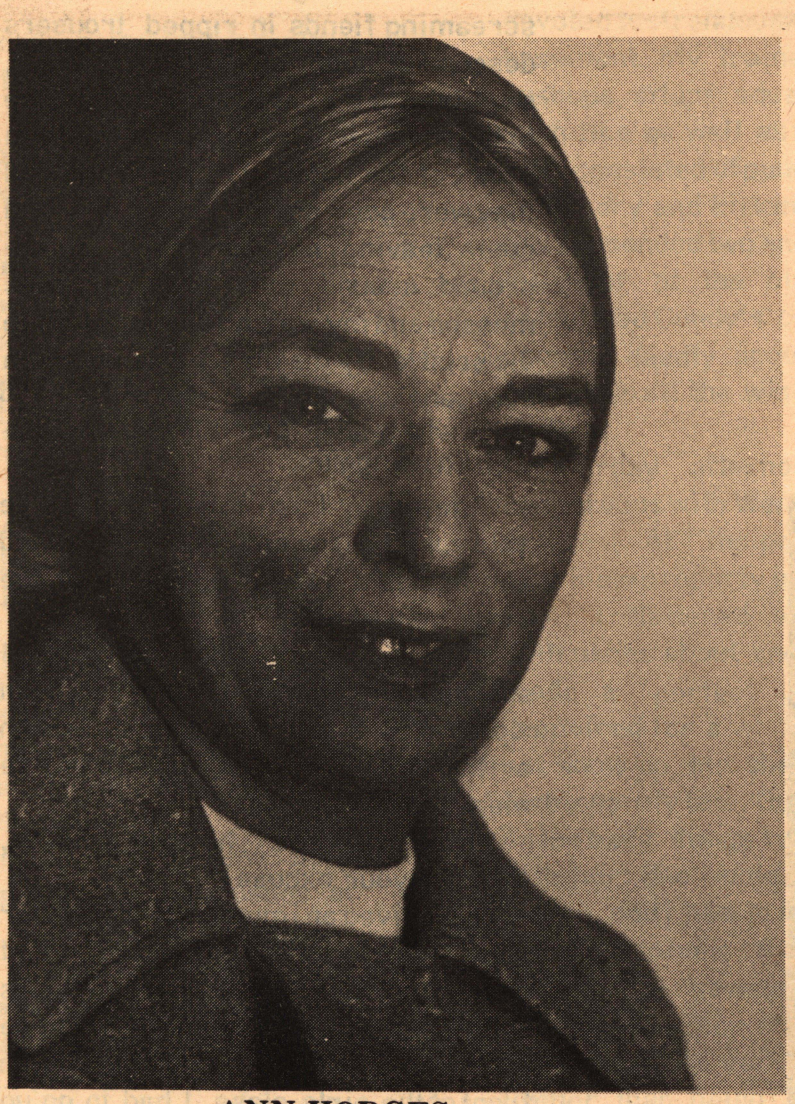
PHOTOS FOR JIMMIE'S GO AROUND: BILL THOMAS



ANN HODGES

FRIENDS

The bud of a rose
More beautiful in each day
Of its unfolding.

JOHN THOMSON

DEVIL IN CONTROL

I tell them certain rhythm
robs me of by soul
leaves me as a robot
with a devil in control

and if I had been a child
in Nazi Germany
I would have goose-stepped to those
marches

Sieg Heil'ed in that frenzy
for heaven could not have held me
with a devil in control.

"But you...we...would have stopped in
time,"
they say so sure. Too quickly

I respond "oh yes"
when really I'm not so sure
of you, nor them,
nor of the child (now adult) possessed.

BY ANN HODGES

GUTS AND CUNDY

BY STEVE COWIE

The first day of school turned out to be a Tuesday because of the long weekend and, for scheduling purposes, was to be called Day one. This was one little detail that a child had to learn in coming to Central School. Here also, everyone lined up two abreast to enter in the morning. I found myself standing alone in the row of solid pairs. I saw that I was the smallest - no second smallest, - person in grade seven. A slovenly greaser stepped up beside me finally.

"You fron Raymer, kid?" He peered at me out of the side of his face.

"Yes."

He grunted. "You in the brain class?"

"Ya," I answered uneasily.

"Guts," he said, turning toward me and clearing some mucous out of his throat.

"What?"

He pointed at his protruding belly. "My name, any obs?"

"Oh no, nice to meet you. Mines Stanley."

"I'll call you Runt," he snorted and held out his hand. I tried to shake it but he held it so limply that it felt like a dead peice of flesh. Before I could say anymore he drifted back into the line saying, "Yuk, yuk, yuk, yuk, yuk."

At recess we were all forced out of the building. I stood near the stairs between the gym and the school waiting for the bell to go back in. I had chosen a hazardous place to stand however, for only seconds before the bell went a little grommet of grade-sixer scrambled to the top of the stairs and bellowed at the top of his voice "Scatter!" With this he took a large wad of baseball cards from his pocket and threw them high in the air above my head. As I turned to flee they showered down about me. Before they had reached the ground a multitude of screaming fiends in ripped trousers descended upon me from nowhere, snatching at the cards and crushing me to the pavement in their haste to claim a part of the booty. The bell rang and they were gone as quickly as they had come leaving not one card on the ground around me. My hair was messed and my watch face cracked in the scuffle. By the time I was up again everyone was inside except myself and Guts who leaned placidly against the wall chewinggum.

"Stay away from the card pit," he said yukking it up as before. He yawned and trundled into the school with me close behind him.

When we entered the classroom I saw that our regular teacher had been replaced by a man who specialized in arithmetic, phys. ed, and punitive measures.

"Richard is fat," he said smiling, "what's your excuse?"

I conceived an immediate dislike for this stern desciplinarian that everyone called Ybab Senob (Bones Baby backwards), especially when he made me climb the ropes in P. E. in front of the girls class. I had to go up and down three times compared to once for Guts. Apparently this kind of behavior was expected from him and his record had preceded him up through the grades. Guts' ascent of the ropes afforded everyone great amusement as he farted four times on the way up and there were side bets

that he would exceed that feat on the way down. The girls did not stay to find out and were permitted to leave the gym halfway through the demonstration, to the great delight of all the boys who hated taking P.E. with them. They missed the best part of the show anyway as Guts got a quarter of the way down before farting four times in succession and plummeting the rest of the way to the floor landing with a sickening thud. This clever ploy allowed Guts to go to the nurses office and avoid all the other exercies. The P.E. period ended on a down note for me since Ybab Senob forced us all to take showers and I was subject to ridicule because I was the second smallest person in the school.

At lunchtime, Guts slipped me another valuable piece of information.

"Watch out for Cundy!" he told me, but he refused to say who Cundy was or any more about him. I lived in mortal fear of the dreadful and mysterious Cundy for two days. Finally on Thursday, Day three, I pestered Guts until he yielded more hints on the matter.

"'You'll know hime when you see him," Guts hedged as he performed his monitor of the day duties cleaning off the brushes at lunch. I waited for a break between the pounding.

"When will I see him?"

"Probably-smash-at the-smash-baseball-smash-game-smash-this aft. There, that should do it. Don't ya hate the smell of chalk."

"What game is this?"

"The Day Three game. It's a tradition." Guts hit the side of his chest in a Roman salute.

"I don't think I'll play."

"How come? All the grade seveners play."

"I can't. I'm not very good."

Guts gave me a terrible look and let go one of his classic anal explosions. "You've go to !" he said.

All the girls in the seventh grade were out to watch the game. To my surprise I was allowed to go up without even playing the field or tossing the bat. The rabid sport fans murmered their approval of the choice and I felt all eyes upon me. Carefully applying myself to my role, I picked the smallest bat, rubbed dirt on my hands, - some of which got under my nails,- tapped my shoe with the bat and crouched at the plate. The first pitch was aimed quare at my crotch and the second was a throat high screamer . I swung at both pitches and fell down both times concentrating more on avoiding the pitches than hitting them. Getting up to prepare for the next ball, I felt so much like vomiting that I was forced to step out of the box and go down on one knee to the great delight of the spectotors who were screaming it up pretty well by this time. I could hear the occasional plaintive cry in the midst of the laughing from the more compassionate members of the audience. These kind souls shouted such things as "Aw let the poor sucker go," "Put him out of his misery," "Go for his head"' Or simply "Na, na, na, na,na,nea." The general consensus was the equivalent of the time.- honored thumbs down signal or the more modern up the old dirtshoot syndrome.

One can imagine the immense disappointment of the onlookers when by chance , I converted another smoker directed at my genitals into a fairly decent bunt down the line. Adding insult to injury I managed to work my way around the bases, notwithstanding attempts to trip me up and throw dogshit at me, and got home safely. As I was waiting smugly in line For my next at bat I sensed someone behind me, largely due to a bat that was swinging dangerously up between my legs from time to time. Getting up my courage, I turned around and looked up but saw no one. Then I lowered my eyes - it was Cundy! I recognized him as the pitcher from my first time up although he had appeared substantially taller on the mound. I could tell that he was a flunkie by the number of pimples he had managed to cultivate. And yet, he was smaller than I. This fact only served to increase my fear of him . He looked into my nostrils for an arrogant tweny seconds and then gazed past me.

"Look."

Obediently, I turned and looked. Standing separate from the crowd was a tall cute girl with solidly backcombed hair, nylons, a short skirt and breasts (a virtually unknown quantity in any real sense for grade seven). While I made this intentio nally quick appraisal she stood delicately eating an ice-cream bar with an air of innocent detachment. However, my appraisal was not quick enough. She chanced to look my way just as I stared at her and I could not aviod direct contact with her eyes without appearing embarrassed. Unexpectedly, she answered my stare with a gracious look of not immoderate length and crowned it with an ingenuous smile before flashing her eye lashes and shifting her atteniton elsewhere.

The smile had an immediate and devasting effect on my opinion of her. Looking past the cheapening affectation of grade seven fashion I could see the perfection in her features and the endearing modesty in every aspect of her bearing. True to romantic misconception I imagined my senses assaulted by pastoral images embellished by a rhapsody of music, birds and bells. Her impression was imprinted upon my heart like a St. Christopher's Medal. This did not prevent my chancing another look at her to glut my senses and confirm my inf atuation. Her hair shone, her face radiated beauty, her figure projected modesty, her thigh had a drip of ice-cream on it...

"Chiz!"

"huh?" I turned toward the voice and Cundy's surly face.

"Chiz," he repeated elevating one nostril.

"Ugh." My heart sank.

Cundy smoothed his naturally greasy hair back with his hand and wiped the grease on my face.

"That's his chick," a voice said to me from behind Cundy. It was Guts. He had seen the trouble brewing. In a show of bravado he ignored Cundy and, pulling out his comb, slicked back his hair neatly and with style.

Cundy stepped up to Guts and flicked him on the cheek with his finger. A huge red welt immediately jumped out on his sensitive skin. The fans, quiet till this time burst into loud laughter and applause. This eased the tension and my antagonist brushed by me with a suggestion that I go out next time up. He then walked up the plate and hit three home runs in a row without bothering to run the bases.

With suitable deference to Cundy's authority, I struck out on my next turn on two pitches, taking two swipes at one. I was relegated to that position which is the anathema of all young ballplayers; namely right field. In the later stages of the game I had the great misfortune to be still fielding this postion when Cundy hit a towering drive right at me. I cursed the fates that presented me with this dilemna of either catching the ball and incurring Cundy's wrath again or missing an easy chance and looking like a boob to the merciless gallery.

I chose the lesser of two ev ils and was obliged to chase the dropped ball to the fence. Picking up the ball as Cundy was rounding third, I pivoted and threw the ball with all my strenth in the direction of the infield between second and third making certain that it might have no chance of landing anywhere near home plate before Cundy. To my extremedismay, the girl of my dreams (Cundy's chick) had chosen this moment to cross the field to the opposite bleachers and happened to arrive at deep short at the same second as the ball which hit her a glancing blow on the right side of her chest. She slumped immediately to the ground clutching her breast and taking the modest precaution on the way down to cross her legs so that no one might see up her skirt while she was unconscious. Meanwhile, completing my devastation, the ball having deflected off her bosom rolled inexorably to home plate where the catcher tagged out Cundy who had been arrogantly walking in.

Only seconds after the girl fell, the entire female portion of the bleacher audience swarmed to huddle about the inert body. Every boy knows how those girls can huddle when they wat to, but this day they were particularly inspired and huddled beyond my most awesome expectations. The circle remained unbroken for the better part of five minutes as various messengers were dispatched for water, surgical gauze, sanitary napkins and a twenty-two inch piece of driftwood. Complete silence was maintained for this whole time except for the strident orders of a particularly robust girl who took it upon herself to commandeer medical

operations, and the almost inaudible hum of the female swarm that kept us all spellbound.

After these five minutes of injury time had expired and Cundy's chick had been helped to her feet, the swarm broke huddle formation but did not disperse. Instead, in a giant wheeling movement it turned toward me a million arms outstretched and pointing at me, as the hum rose to a rather loud humma, humma, humma, coming closer and closer. The situation began to look especially ugly when the mass got within striking distance for rocks and other projectiles. However, the fat commander, who was no brandishing the twenty-two inch stick (her geography project), gave the order to hold fire. This rotund woman, a good two inches taller than the tallest boy in grade seven and double his weight, could be heard above the general hubbub, yelling at me. The only words I could make out in her frenzied tongue-lashing were "Fricking Boy," "Fricking Boy," "Fricking Boy" which lost effect beacuse of her lisp but nonetheless recurred with fearsome emphasis.

When I was at last surrounded, the monster raised her stick
well above her head in classic female striking position, chest outthrust, legs apart, and lips working at a furious pace.
I fell to my knees in anticipation of my forthcoming demise and crossed myself as I'd seen the Jesuits do in old movies about their conversion of the Iroquois. This gesture had no effect on my oppressor except to elicit a change in her catch phrase from "Fricking Boy" to "Fricking Papisht" both of which she appeared to hate with equal passion.

Cowering in this uncomfortable posture I waited for a crushing blow from the monster's penal rod. Before my short life passed in front of my eyes, however, a shrill cry of "Wait!" stopped up the striking arm of the monster in mid air. It hovered there above my head as the swarm parted like the Red Sea to allow the passage of the girl of my dreams. She smiled compassionately at me and frowned at the monster.

"Let him go... he din't mean to.. it was an accident."

The monster was completely disarmed by this plea and her arm dropped by degrees until the fearsome weapon dangled limply in front of her. She shrugged her shoulders and wallowed away disgusted and impotent, followed by the better part of the swarm.

Thus, miraculously saved, I took the opportunity to get up . Cundy's Chick was still standing there with me in right field uncertain whether to speak or simply walk away. I seized upon this chance to influence her in my favor by saying something cool and witty.

"Are...are you okay?" I asked, staring directly at the spot where the ball had struck her. The side of her chest did not appear to be swollen . She followed my eyes to the object of my concern, blushed bright red, nodded a quick yes and walked away visibly shaken. I had blown it! Worse yet was the reaction of the bystanders who began to hoot and giggle until Cundy made a quick throat cutting motion with his finger.

My sole consolation in all these unhappy consequences was that neither, Ybab Senob nor any other person of authority had appeared during the crisis, although a janitor came out on the gym steps at one point to shake out his long mop and scared the shit out of everyone. Now that things had settled down a bit and since every boy had remained in his respective fielding positon for the whole time, the game was continued almost as if nothing had happened. I suspected, nonetheless, that something unsportsmanlike was being planned by means of significant gestures and expressions. A quick look at Guts confirmed my suspicions. His black T-shirt had an abnormally large sweat stain covering most of his chest and belly and his face was downcast as if in preparation for violent weeping. I knew then, that I could count on good old Guts as a true friend if not as an ally in a fight.

I worked my way up to the plate with peculiar quickness. They wanted me there for some reason and it looked hardly coincidental that the dreaded Cundy was again pitching. in anticipation of his favorite pitch I leapt back on delivery and was so frightened that I managed to hit it into the outfiled. I sprinted to first; was thrown out at second trying to stretch it to a double; continued on to third, which I ran straight through to the road; and turning on the afterburners, headed straight for home with clods of dirt and small rocks pepppering the street around me as I made my escape. I was edgy that night. I hovered about the phone so that when it rang I could answer it and say I was not in. It was all I could do to finish my social studies project on Volcanoes that I had to present the next day. Only in the brain class do the students have assignments in the first week of school . This was one of the things Cundy hated most about us.

When the phone went off (rang) I had a variety of fear alternatives. If it was a man's voice, it was the principal; if it was a boy's voice, it was the dreaded Cundy; if it was a woman's voice, it was the monster!

At 9:17 I lifted up the phone a quarter of the way through the first ring, but before I could say I was not at home a boy's voice shouted:

"Don't hang up!"

I hung up.

At 9:18 I was bathed in sweat. At 9:19 the phone was still of the hook. I put it down and it rang immediately. I had not lifted it more than an inch off the reciver when the voice yelled:

"It's Guts!" I relaxed for a second then my suspicions returned.

"What's the password?" I bluffed.

There was a short pause and the inimitable "Yuk, yuk, yuk,..." assaulted my ears.

"Boy, am I ever glad it's you," I sighed.

"Guess what?"

"What?" I felt depressed again.

"Guess who phoned?"

"Don't tell me.. who? I can't guess."

"The chick."

"Who ? The monster?" I asked, hoping it was who I thought it was.

"No, Wendy Wostrodowski."

"Who?"

"Cundy's chick."

"No! Really?... I don't believe it... What did she say? Anthing about me - nah, she wouldn't do that. Would she?"

"You gotta know it!"

"Yahoo!"

"She was too shy to phone you, so she phoned me. Well actually she didn't really phone me but her friend did and she told her what to say." Guts burped. "Spaghetti for dinner, can't talk much longer, feel like I'm gonna puke."

"Wait, what did she say?"

"I dunno, look I don't feel so good."

I was frantic. "Just tell me what she said."

"She said she thought you were cute. Bye."

"Hold it. Did she say anything else?"

"Isn't that enough? See ya tomorrow."

"Ya okay, see ya. Bye." I hung up, pausing only a split second before I ran into the living room and leapt high in the air. My fists broke the globe on the living room light and bits of glass rained down on my head. Only then did I notice my mother sitting on the couch.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" She asked in typical mother language.

"It's that time of month."

The following day (Friday, Day 4), I took my bike to school to better avoid meeting up with my enemies. This was a desperate action since bikes were definitely not cool to ride to school. I put the hood of my squall jacket up so that noone would recognize me. All my efforts went for nothing, when Cundy and his gang (two snot-faced greasers) made a human roadblock across the back alley I had to go through to get to school. I had blundered into their favorite smoking place. There was no turning back so I tried to ride through them. Escape was withing my grasp until Cundy put a stick through my spokes and brought my bike to a rapid halt. So abrupt was the stop that I slipped off the seat onto the bar with the usual painful results that attend that kind of accident. I lifted up my head in agony and Cundy slugged me in the face.

"What was that for?" I asked trying to act innocent and tough at the same time.

"I don't like your looks," Cundy sneered and pushed me and my bike over into a mud puddle. My project got soiled. I started to cry and they left.

Cont'd Page 7

JIMMIE'S GO AROUND

BY BILL THOMAS

That's how we came up from the village. We were hoofing but this guy in a red pickup, he gave us a ride into town. We was just walking along in the dust and he come up an Phillip Jimmie he stuck out his hand and the guy stopped. We run up the road fast as we could me and Phillip Jimmie, and this guy in the big cowboy hat said you guys going to the stampede, and we said yes fast as we could and he said get in the back and we did. It was full of gear like he was going to ride in the stampede and he shouted back to me and Phillip Jimmie. 'You guys like a couple of cold beer?' and we yelled Yes.

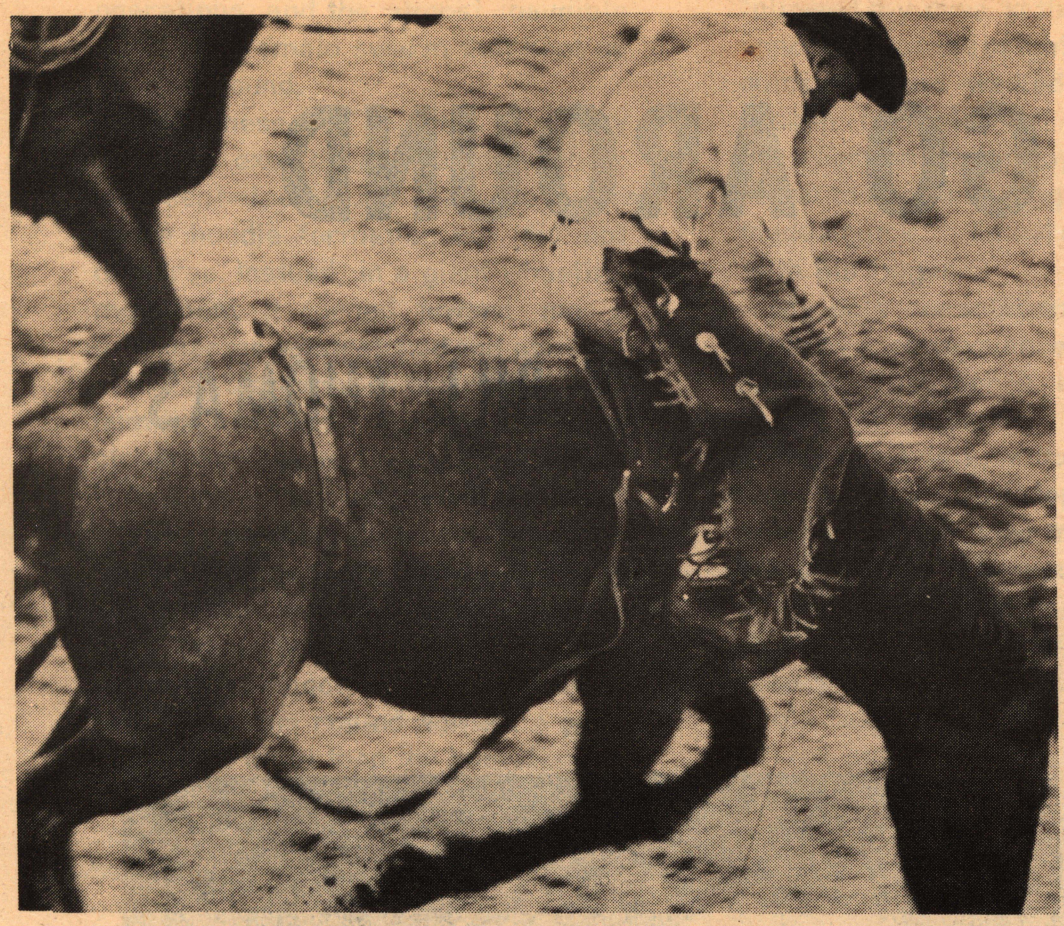
There was one hell of a noise from the road and all. He handed us back two beer and me and Phillip yelled back Thanks, for the beer. I yell to him how good and cold it was and he shout back it had been in the creek 'til he left the home ranch. We had one hell of a good time. Me and Phillip. This guy kept on handing back bottles of beer.

When we got to the lake he let us off in front of the beer parlor and Phillip and me, we went inside. We met a bunch from the reserve that we know pretty good.

They been out for the season haying so they had a few bucks and we had some more beer. After a bit we went to the cafe. Phillip ask the girl for a big steak and, she said 'You Indians got enough for a steak and that Phillip Jimmie pulled out a fist of money from his jeans and she come with two steaks and we had plenty. Bye and bye we went out after we had pie and all.

We went to the hotel and had some more beer. That Phillip he had too many beer. A guy come round selling church papers and asking for money and Phillip he told him go to hell. 'That crazy Phillip he go to church all times and he's a good Catholic but he so goddam drunk he don't know.

Bout time for us to leave this Patrick Louie say to Phillip he can't make it as a cowboy in any outfit and Phillip get good and mad. So he bet Patrick Louie he can ride bronc in the stampede and do good as any cowboy.



Bye and bye we left that hotel and me and Phillip went off to tent town behind the stampede grounds and there were a few fires still burning.

We had a shot of rye and Alex Paul told that Phillip he was drunk so he went in the tent and lie down. Me and Alex had another shot and he said to me 'Freddie that Phillip is crazy in his head'' but I laughed.

Next day we washed in the creek but Phillip was still mad as hell. He kept saying and saying he was good a cowboy as anyone on that whole goddam range and me I keep telling him, forget it. I told him he was crazy to listen to what some cowboy in the beer parlor tell him. Phillip said he was mad at him and he was no crazy Indian. He was good and mad right along.

We took off back to the tents and there was guys from the Circle K drinking coffee and rum and after a bit I thought Phillip was OK and we could go down to the grounds to take in the calf roping. Phillip was still pretty mad.

Down the line of tents a piece there was a ring of guys rolling cigarettes and shooting the breeze. We stopped and one of them he handed Phillip the rollings. Phillip rolled a cigarette and then made one for me and we lit them both with a stick from that fire.

One of the hands from the Jay Ranch, the spread next to us, asked Phillip if he could cut it on a bare bronc and that crazy Phillip said he could ride the devil to hell and back. All the white guys started laughing and one said Phillip couldn't ride any old windbroke mare to a water trough. Phillip he got good and mad and wanted to fight. But we pulled him off and got him a shot of rye. Bye and bye they teased him some more and said he could ride the bronc if he had guts and wasn't just some chicken Indian. That make Phillip Jimmie good and mad all over.

Me I just smoked that cigarette and listened. There's no use to buck Phillip when he is mad and a bit drunk too. Those white guys were just having fun with him. Phillip Jimmie was a good rider, maybe the best wrangler I seen. Most of the best cowboys are from our reserve. He was crazy to go on that way and all. He had a couple more shots and said he would ride the broncs but he had no entry money. We drank it. Then there was one hell of a fuss and some guy said if this goddam Indian can ride then we sure as hell going to get the cash.

He went up that line of tents with his hat and said to everyone Phillip Jimmie was going in the bareback bronc event. Soon he had a hatful of money. More that the $15 we needed to get him in.

They sure put too much booze into Phillip Jimmie, he made one poor Indian. He made just like a bird, small boned and quiet but with the drink he gets pretty mouthy. He fed cows all winter in a cabin in the bush. Just him and them cows and a big pile of loose hay. He shot one coyote all winter that was all except maybe cut a hole in the ice on the creek now and then. When he come out after breakup he was ready to lick his weight in wildcats. He's small like a bird.

A squaw in the next tent made Phillip a flapjack and the boys were all covering bets on how long he could last. He looked pretty sick when a bunch of us went on down to the stampede office. He wanted to go, he just had to go that was all there was to it.

The two guys in the office had big white hats and thought Phillip was crazy. They wanted to toss him right out but the guys holding the bets staightened them out. They said Phillip was in the bronc class. So the guys took his money and signed him up and gave his two cards with 35 on and told him to tie them on front and back.

One of the big guys in the white hats looked sort of sorry for Phillip He said he would need a good pair of chaps and spurs if he was going to try the broncs. . . Two of the betting guys said not to worry. After a while they came back with a pair of old batwing chaps that had flowers carved on. They looked pretty fancy on Phillip but they hung too low. He is small and they dragged in the dust. We went to the chutes to look over the stock. Phillip had a pair of spurs. Big rowels that clinked when he got moving. The whole get up made him look like a dude. Hell of a thing for a working hand to look like a dude but sure as hell he did. Nobody told Phillip. He was having a good time so we didn't mess it for him.

While we were looking over the bucking string some feller comes running up and asks Phillip Jimmie if he is 35 and he points to the card. He says to look for a big gray gelding named Inflammation. That's the horse he drew in the first go around.

The two guys holding the betting money looked a bit fazed by the draw but me and Phillip we went over to the chutes to look over this cayuse.

He was a big gray with yellow eyes and big feet. He looked like one wicked horse. He had his ears flat back and he was looking around for trouble. That son of a bitch was jammed in that chute pretty tight but he was mad and ready to go. The stock hands were having one hell of a time getting that bucking rig on him and he was squeezed up tight. He must have been through all this a hundred times but he was still as mad as the first.

One hand slipped the bucking ring onto his back and he near got bit. They fished the belly cinch under him with a wire but it took damn near a half hour to get it up snug. This was Phillip's horse. He was going to ride him. I wanted to tell him forget all about it but we give him another shot of rye straight from the bottle and wish him good luck.

That Phillip Jimmie climbed up the rails and got aboard that damned Inflammation soft like. The announcer shouts that he is coming out of chute number one wearing number 35.

I guess it only took a minute but it seemed like forever. Phillip raked him hard with those spurs. That horse he went up on all fours and he come down the same way but hard.

That spooky gelding danced with Phillip on his back. He took off with his front feet, his back feet and then all four feet. Phillip Jimmie he though he had the world by the tail. That Inflammation knows better cowboys. Next buck and Phillip is on his face in the dirt and that son of a bitch smashed him with both hind feet. The pickup men come over fast but Phillip had the course He got it full in the face with both feet. Just once, and it seemed like it never happened. Me and a couple of hands run into the ring to try and pick him up. I tried to turn him over but it made me pretty damn sick. That gray Inflammation hit him dead centre, both feet.

CONT'D PAGE 8

I had a detention that afternoon because my project was dirty. I had not seen Cundy all day but I knew my life would have been worth nothing if I had finked on him. Guts also had a detention that day because of a particularly lewd section he had written in a short story for English. It dealt with a girl and a boy taking their clothes off by a waterfall. Guts sat in his usual detention desk, on which were printed numerous gems of grafitti that had brought him a season's membership in that detention room in past years. The teachers, and espeically Ybab Senob, did not like what they called the "scatalogical content" of his messages.

Guts and I took this private opportunity to exchange notes dealing with the events of the day and the plans for the future. First of all, Guts made it clear that a showdown between myself and Cundy was inevitable and that I should gain the psychological edge by issuing up a challenge to my enemy. I t was agreed that I would phone Cundy that night and arrange a fight ot the death for Monday, Day 5, after school in "the alley." We reasoned this gave me the weekend to learn all the rudiments of alley fighting from Guts. He was lousy at it because his reputation was well enough established to be exempt. However he had watched plenty of fights and knew my opposites style pretty well. This gave me another advantage.

Our conferrence was taking place under the bony nose and joined eyebrows of the gaunt Ybab Senob so we though it only fitting that the second item on our agenda should concern him. Therefore, since the name Ybab Senob was becoming too well known to unreliable members of the teacher's staff we, or I should say, Guts suggested that we call him Wascana starting next Day one. I seconded the motion with a poorly concealed snicker that aroused our overseer's vigilance. After a moment of statuelike behavior by us he went back to whatever it was he was reading in the drawer of his desk and we discussed the last point on the agenda. This was closest ot my heart and concerned and arrangement made by intermediaries (Guts and a friend of Cundy's chick) by which I was to meet the girl of my dreams at a designated spot in the bullrushes at "the point" on Saturday. I was as delighted by this as I had been by the discovery that she was in my class. It was all the more astonishing when one considers the usual type of unsightly girls more along the lines of a "monsters" or a Scum Scmolik found in a brain class.

Day four ended with Guts and I cruising back alleys on our bikes like fighter pilots making lightning swoop attacks on unsuspecting gargage cans and sending them spinning with crashing death blows from our dual Dash running fhoes. These maneuvers, Guts said, were intended to build up my aggressiveness and killer instinct. It also afforded a great deal of pleasure at the expense of a woman, who, upon hearing us knock her dustbins flying, came running out into her back yard in a state of undress screaming "Leave my cans alone!" My friend Guts really yukked it up about that. He had an uncanny knack of adjusting from being cool with the gang at school to being an ordinary kid.

When I got home I phoned Cundy immediately so I could not chicken out. As soon as the voice at the other end said hello I launched into my intimidation speech.

"Look, this is Stanley. Ya wanna fight kid? Well yer gonna get one if...

"I beg your pardon," the voice said, "I suppose you want to speak to my son."

"Yes sir, is Cund - Doug there please?"

The father called the son to the phone saying itwas one of his friends. Surprise was still on my side.

"Hullo, ya, speak ta me."

"Look, this is Stanley, you little squirt. Ya wanna fight, kid? Well yer gonna get one if you aren't chicken to show up at the alley Monday after school. I hate yer guts...Cundy!"

"Sure I'll be there" he yawned "but if I'm not there when ya get there start without me. Ha, Ha, Ha."

I hung up. I had done it and he sounded scared.

The evening of that day, most of Saturday and all of Sunday were devoted to strenuous workouts in Guts' basement. My trainer had me doing pushups, situps, squat jumps and the such like as well as fighting practice. This consisted of punching ata bag full of laundry and kicking at a cardboard box suspended two and a half feet from the floor at the place where Guts calculated Cundy's crotch would be. I became deadly accurate at this and soaked up all the wise tips Guts could think of.

Saturday afternoon I had my rendezvous with Wendy (the girl of my dreams(. At "the point," a peninsula of private property jutting out into the lake, I flattened out a square of bullrushes about six by six so that it made a perfect roofless fort. I despaired for a while that whe would not show up, but she finally arrived - fashiona bly late. Guts had briefed me on the basic things I was supposed to do with her. She would have none of it, though, and I had to be content to kiss for about an hour straight until my lips felt limp. She gave me a promise of her undying affection and I told her I was going to fight for her on Monday. Rather than being upset about this news as I had expected, she seemed very pleased about it and rubbed her hands together several times. I asked her then if she had ever smoked bullrushes before and she said she had not; so we did. I threw up after, but she did not even feel badly so I suspected that she had done it before.

When I returned to Guts' place his first question was:

"Did ya tag her?"

"I winked at him" I'm not one of these guys that kisses and tells."

He yukked it up a bit and we went back to training with renewed vigour. I did all the work while he inhaled peanut butter sandwiches, eating the inside first and the circle of crusts last.

Monday, Day five, the day of reckoning, I told my mother that I had fallen out of bed and hit my head on the floor so hard that I had a splitting headache so critical that I did not know whether I could go to school or not. She forced me to go.

When I arrived at school everyone in Central was buzzing with news of the fight. I felt ill for the whole day and could hardly smile even when Wendy looked at me. I looked so ill that I was allowed to spend recess in the nurses office. As monior of the day, I performed my duties so poorly that I almost got to stay after school until one of my enemies ratted on me to Ybab Senob. Ybab Senob favoured Cundy because he was good in sports.

The day flashed past and at 3 :03 I was ushered into "the alley" by Guts, my second, and a crowd of enthusiastic blood mongers. No one openly voiced their support for me because they were all scared shitless of Cundy. He made me wait, shaking in my sneakers, until 3:13, when he and his gang strutted out of Keystone's store smoking cigarettes and chewing gum at the same time, and arrogantly walked down the corridor of spectators to where I stood. He stripped off his shirt but I left mine on, because I needed all the protection I could get. I could smell his sweat.

"Yer gonna get it, kid."

"Ya," I squealed "Yer gonna get it too!"

He moved toward me with one nostril elevated and his fists up. Guts whispered in my ear.

"Remember, watch out for the boot in the sac."

I nodded and he pushed me out into the circle. Cundy was circling for the kill, leering at me. I stared at his spider-killer pointed black shoes and prepared to grab whichever one flew at me first. They were both two inches too long for his feet, but I was ready for them. He caught me by surprise when he walked up to me and stuck two fingers in my eyes before I could move. I blinked and waited for the kick, watching for for black foot through the flood of water. It did not come. Instead he punched me square in the nuts with his fist. On the way down, I flailed away madly and got a lucky punch on to the end of his nose. He stood above me while I knelt on my hands and knees and bled into my hair and on the back of my neck. I was in too much distress to move and awaited further punishment.

I was saved for the second time in a five day week though, as a giant fist came from nowhere to hit Cundy a brutal blow in the throat. His Adam's

CONT'D PAGE 8

JIMMIE'S GO AROUND
CONT'D FROM PAGE 6

The police he made me put my name to it all so I made my name Freddie Jimmie for it's all the truth. He said bye and bye there would be more questions but I could take Phillip home. I stood up and he said what about his things and I told him the chaps and spurs belonged to some white guys.

I went down to the beer parlor and found two guys with a pickup who live our way. So we wrap Phillip in a tarp and took him home. Pretty damned stupid all ways around.

BILL THOMAS

TWILIGHT

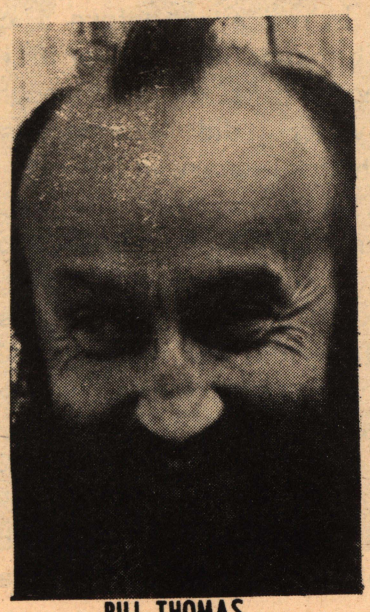
Under the rose-bush
An old cat sleeps fitfully
Surrounded by crows.

COLIN CAMPBELL

PATIENCE

Huddled on a lawn
Seagulls, grounded by a storm
Await the sunrise.

COLIN CAMPBELL



BILL THOMAS

Point Of Departure

We came and he went in dust,
red dust, swirling and clouding us over.
We joked, laughing, drinking, bragging and lying without restraint,
Wild talk, chaff and chatter, bettor's banter,
setting him up for his own disaster.

Me on the rail and him in the ring,
red dust swirling and clouding him over.
They yelled, screaming, shouting, urging
and bellowing without thought.
A great cry, silence and wonder, crowd's chatter,
telling us he's made his last mistake.

Still in his spurs, dead in the ring,
red dust swirled and shrouded him over.
We carried him, shattered, broken, bleeding
and smashed beyond belief.
A sharp snort, pawing and heaving, horse sweat,
Ignoring the smell of death.

BILL THOMAS

MORNING PEACE

The faint hiss of rain
In the fog—dampened stillness,
A lone seagull's cry.

JOHN THOMSON

Death Chant

Long, long time ago
He was a seed,
Planted in me he grew slowly.
Slowly he grew like spring grass
And in his time he came,
Crying and mewing he drew breath.

Ripening and ripe he grew
From that grain,
Standing by me he grew strongly.
Stongly he grew like the slim birch
Until his time came.
Laughing and loving he knew life.

Harsh and swift his time came,
Now he is gone;
Nearby he's laid to rot slowly.
Gladly he goes to join his fathers
Now his time has come.
Weeping softly his mother mourns him.

BILL THOMAS

GUTS & CUNDY CONT'D
FROM PAGE 7

apple indented a good two inches and his eyes rolled back as he turned to face his antagonist.

IT WAS THE MONSTER! She was panting harshly and muttering obscenities under her breath. Cundy half-heartedly raised his fists at her but she wound up from behind her head and clubbed him with a vicious forearm shiver that made the loud thudding noise of two rocks colliding. I only wished that she had her twenty-two inches of driftwood with her. Without it, Cundy slumped to the ground, beside me. I hastened to pursue the advantage and sat on top of him, brandishing my fist in his face. He yelled "I give" and the crowd roared, then called for no quarter. None was given.

I finally got up from the inert body to shake the monster's hand. Pulling me up against her like a rag doll, she hissed into my face, "I'll see you in the bullrushes."